POEMS LYRIC AND DRAMATIC

ETHEL LOUISE COX

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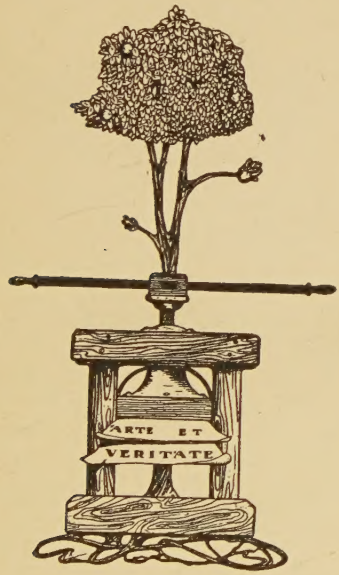
Poems
Lyric and Dramatic

By ETHEL LOUISE COX



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OVERTURE.

I who am not mine own but all the world's,
Whether or star or glow-worm God has loosed
To light a pleasant, June rose-garden flushed
And green and full of lutes; a lamp within
The rose: or silver planet making choir
With constellations of the flashing heights:
Shine, thus loosed, on the greening ways of
earth.
Light yours—not mine, since God has given it.

THE HAMADRYAD.

The shepherd, Rhaicos, coming from the meads,
The river-lawns where fed his snow-white sheep;
Stretching his length beneath a mossy oak,
Played, in the shade, upon his sylvan pipe
Tuneful to the hushed bird amid the boughs
That over-hung the bright grass and wild flowers,
Now let a golden sunbeam slip! and now
A glimpse of blue sky shine! Idle, he played,
Till looking up—ah, happy youth! what saw
He by his side, upon the smooth, starred moss?
A Nymph, a maid divine! if those white limbs,
The wild-rose lip, and deep, soft fall of hair,
Bespoke immortal race! The polished leaf
Of oak, and acorns garlanded her brow,

Of forest green and grey her succinct robe;
And o'er her head a glittering, humming swarm,
On gauzy wing, of golden bees circled
And flitted: woodland odors breathed from her.
Smiling, she gazed upon the wondering youth!
But as he, boylike, longed to pluck the rose,
And trembled and glowed towards her—she was gone!
And but the pressure of her dainty foot,
Upon the moss, remained to tell of her!
Unhappy Rhaicos! while the slow dial passed
From shine to shade; and oped and closed the flowers!
Until the gods, with kindness looking down
From higher splendor, would befriend the youth:
And one warm-breathing summer noon, beneath
The branching oak, he spied the unwilling fair;
Her white feet 'mid lush grass and lilies blown:
And eagerness o'ercoming awe and dread
Born of her beauty, wooed her with soft words,

And trembling passion. Waning, flushing, coy,
She listened: then raising her eyes, she spoke—
"Wilt thou love, Rhaicos? and knowest thou whom
Thou dost sue here?" "Naught know I save that thou
Art beautiful," replied the youth, "For more,
I'll pray the gods who made thee fair that thou
Mayest be kind!" "O rash and fond! wilt love
A Hamadryad?" "Not a mortal maid!
Warm, blooming as thou art with lovely youth!
Nay, then I see that thou art all divine:
I swoon to touch that soft and flowerlike hand,
Or fondly gaze upon that bashful head;
For heavenly airs surround thee: nor hath maid
Voice like the music falls upon mine ear—
So sing the Muses. Not a mortal maid?
Alas, have pity! and my love shall prove
As deathless as the great days of the gods
Who know not how sweet 'tis to press some hand,

Or gaze into eyes that look back their love—
As I look deep now into dear blue depths!
O wilt thou love me? wilt thou even kiss?
Sweet, with thy promise make me as the gods!"
"Shepherd, and wilt renounce sweet mortal love,
That runs through changing seasons, from blythe
May,
Then summer, last autumnal days that end
Where lie the daisies, for my kiss? ne'er sue
A maid? bethink thee ere thou askest love.
Pure must the tie be that shall bind our hearts!
And dread the doom befalls inconstancy!"

"By Zeus and twinkling stars of heaven, I swear
No life to have save what thy lips shall give;
My heart held captive by thy sungilt locks
Where summer lingers warm to kisses prest.
Nay, fear not! be mine own as I am thine!"
Swift came his vows! she harkened, for what
maid
Denies belief when tears and sighs prove love?

And sank her blushing head upon his breast,
And o'er them, happy, in the breezy ways
The rosy Hours fluttered their light wings.
A dial of flowers marked their perfect days.
Like sunshine through the veins her presence was,
Or as the blowing of the south wind sweet
From fleecy April cloud o'er fields of flowers:
And bounteous life and beauty were her gifts,
And gracious blisses Nature's self bestows.
Thus exiled, earth-born hearts desire a love
Beyond Youth's first shy stars: draw heaven down,
As slipped divinity from sparkling mists
Before the shepherd startled unaware
By rose-bloom, dazzling wire of locks bespread,
A glory floating 'tween her foot and earth—
Else 'twas the crocus on the greensward sprung—
Idalian Aphrodite, runs the tale.
They met at sunset, when the daffodil sky
A throbbing star held, and the woods were still,

And balm-dews dropped from leafy branch and
spray:
And "Love," she said, at parting, "Do not push
Thy bride from thy thoughts when dost leave my
side.
Wait, Rhaicos! wait—or thou shall't lose thy
kiss!
Think then how lonely I await thee here,
When woods are dim; and come to-morrow eve,
An hour before the love-star lights the sky."
She spoke, nor turned away from his embrace,
That fond and faithful, stilled her gentle sighs.
Ah! luckless shepherd! better hadst thou ne'er
Known Music's charm, and silver-dropping
showers!
For skilled was Rhaicos both with reed and
song;
And 'mid his comrades laid along the sward,
Each flower-crowned and friendly-emulous,
He knew not when the twilight hour drew near,
Nor saw the windy peaks flushed by the sun

Ere it sank in the misty ocean baths,
Nor loosed the arm about his neck, nor heard
The tongues of sheep-bells from the cloudy hills,
Forgot the hour assigned and bliss in store;
But prompted by his rich and bounteous love
Drew inspiration sweet from secret springs,
Her leaf-hid charms and beauty undivined.
And as he paused for breath a yellow bee,
A bustling elf of May-dews, cowslip leas,
Buzzed o'er his head and hummed about his lips,
And driv'n away returned with louder din!
Till wearied, Rhaicos roughly brushed it off,
Beat back the wingy messenger of love,
That wheeled with angry dart and flew away
Towards evening woods and the Thessalian oak.
'Twas wounded and one fairy wing hung torn!
But to the Dryad, faithful, it returned
And showed its bruised wing to her gentle eyes.
A shriek burst from her sad lips at the sight;
And mournful breeze of lamentation filled

The green aisles of the distant, recessed woods!
Then looking up Rhaicos saw the sweet star
Set in the blue of heaven; and his heart
Divining her despairing cry, he turned,
Stumbling with hasty footsteps through the fern,
And ran through green glooms of the forest glades,
Forded the runnel trickling through wood-ways,
And found the oak—the hoary trunk lay prone,
With vine and hawthorn uptorn by its fall
And shattered branches strewn upon the sod:
Felled by no wind that ever blew from heaven.
Nor answered gentle accents to his calls:
Nor light and life revisited his eyes!

THE DAISY.

Opest a golden eye in each white field,
Sweet, simple flower! blossom by the way!
No fragrance to the rifling breeze dost yield,
As doth the opulent rose, but to the May
Thy pearlèd leaf is dear! and starry head,
Fed by clear dews, and sun, and ambient air;
O'er the bright grass, in dazzling blossom spread,
When all the fields with buds and sprays are
fair!

A white lamb that adown the valleys strays,
Folded 'mid lilies by the crystal stream;
A ship upon a faery main, sea-ways,
Afloat; a star of evening dost thou seem!

Lighting the vaporous twilight with thy sheen,
Meek blossom! that breath'st of innocent hours!
The rustling leaf, soft breeze, clear skies between
Green gloom of boughs, and pastoral life of
flowers!

MUSIC.

Thy hand is on the harp-strings, and thy voice,
A silver fountain of pure melody,
Rises in sunny joy, in rapture free!

What whispers from the past breathe o'er the strings?
Magical odors, and an April breath
From green fields where a lost breeze wandereth?

Blue skies and silver leaf and bloom and scent
With thy tones mingle; and a joy as shy
As one faint violet lone 'neath the sky.

Until thy voice sinks with a twilight sadness:
In the dim distance, memories steal, unheard:
In the grey dawning, pipes a wakening bird.

Thy voice leaps like a fountain, sparkling bright!
Then like a white swan on a winding river,
It solemn drifts, slow-singing, chanting ever!

Unto my soul it speaks of bygone things,
Of vague hope, of a splendor yet unknown,
Of dim airs from a wasted planet blown.

Like Hebe, drops of nectar-fire thou pourest;
Till frame we golden ladders to the sky:
We drink and, god-like, think we shall not die!

Now, dropping from the skies, a songful bird,
Content, thou singest, with old fields and bowers,
The green grass, and the simple daisy flowers.

MUTABILITY.

We prize but what we lose! could the spring stay,
With its pure skies, perfumes, and rose, alway,
Nor burn to summer bright—stayed that fair
star,
A-tremble in the evening hush afar,
Fixed in mild splendor in the purple sky!
Would our hearts leap with the May morn? or
sigh
With passion for that one white sphere? so fair,
O Youth, wild, white swan of Life's sea! would'st
e'er
Be, if we knew not that on some green day,
Thou would'st flee far, on faery seas away,
To visionary lands, and meadows deep
In fabled asphodel, and mists of sleep?

NARCISSUS.

Beside a little stream, upon whose tide
The primrose trembled—crown and lovely leaves
Glassed in its crystal—on the dewy sward,
'Midst budding flowers, knelt the youth, and gazed,
Fondly, upon the lucid wave that gave
Back to his longing eyes, the image bright
Of white brow, golden locks fallen upon
His shoulders clear, the rose and lily of
His cheek, and amorous, flower-like mouth. Intent
Upon that vision fair, he let slip by
Each rosy hour from dawn to eve. A bird
Upon a nearby spray lighted and sang,

Warbling and fluttering in the light breeze 'mid
White-flower buds: a golden butterfly
Darted above, with eyed wings spread: the rose
Oped wide, in fragrance, to the hovering bee
Murmuring in her amber cells: and through
The silver stream, the flitting fish winnowed
The current bright: but all unheeding, gazed
Love-lorn Narcissus on that beauty fair,
Wave-born; and oped his lips, in sad lament—
"O whether nymph of the clear stream, with locks
Pearl-braided, lily-crowned, who from thy deeps
And grotto cold, arisest to the marge;
Leaving thy lilies for these pastoral flowers!
Or bride of the Sea-God strayed from the wave,
The glittering foam, and white flocks of the deep,
And plunging dolphins! Amphitrite art:
Have pity on my love and sighs; and on
My constancy that holds me here, forlorn;
Afar from shepherd life. Sweetest, forsake
Thy brimming wave for this fair, flowered lea!

Thy songs for my fond adoration! come!
For if I may not have thy love, I die!
Forget thy golden sands, and icy wave,
Green-gleaming through the rushes: here are joys
As sweet—and waiting thee, here kneeleth love!"
He paused—and Echo, from the far, blue hills,
Alone made mournful answer to him—"Love!"

TIME.

A radiant child that o'er the blossomy lawn
Wanders, a playmate of light shade, and wind,
Of golden bee, and wild bird hymning dawn;
Plucking sweet flowers, with a changeful mind!
Pure violet, and lilies, golden leaf,
Crocus aflame, all buds the butterfly
Quivers above: sudden! beyond belief
The sunshine fades between far boughs! the sky
Is lost, and gloom the forest arches wild,
Dense, silent, desolate in reedy deep!
Night falls through dusk of ancient boughs. The child,
Frighted and lost, drops its bright flowers, to weep!
They die, and fade away like magic mist,
Rose, beryl, sapphirine, and amethyst!

REMEMBRANCE.

Like halcyons, drifting on a spangled wave
Reflecting serene skies, whose bright wings lave
In liquid pearl, and lovely necks entwine·
So thoughts of thee on memory's dark sea shine,
And only come upon a quiet deep,
With floating flower branch, and winds asleep
With influence mild, and starry mystery,
And soft reflections in the dreaming sea!

PROLOGUE.

With chaplets of myrtle, and of the rose,
My brows are bound; my robes of Tyrian blue,
Color of the clear sky, fall from the clasp
Of price, gleaming on one bare shoulder white,
Beneath the careless strings of night-black hair.
The golden lyre trembles 'neath my hand
So soon to free its prisoned soul, to strike
Its highest chords. Ye, in your places there!
Arising, tier on tier before my eyes:
Ye human faces, I have loved, and toiled
And anguished for—and triumphed! ah! too loved!
Too dear, with raptured eyes! Ye throbbing breasts!

And eager hands, half stretched to grant the
prize,
The rods of lilies, tremulous, dewy-fresh
With sparkling drops. Above is the blue sky,
Empty, save for the sudden crane-flight, with
Its clangor, from the marshes and the sea
Lipping and whispering on the shining shore,
'Mid shell, and spangle, and strange water-lives.
O heaven and earth meet in this life! Look, still—
Turn not your eyes away, because my breast
Bursts with its sighs of hope and longing! bend
Still on me all the love and praise ye speak
Silently; while I wake the lyre's strings;
My heart aflame with rapture! Hear me! This
Hour is immortal, and we cannot change!
One touch of showery, pearly notes—listen!

PSYCHE.

O butterfly, darting from sweet to sweet,
On glittering, rainbow wings! when hushed and dark,
All the dim season, shut in still retreat,
Swathed like some mummied, Eastern king, didst hark
To sounds beyond? hadst still a hope? didst see,
In dreams, blue skies, fresh flowers, and bloomy lea?

E'en so, my soul! at times a blinding ray
Streams through wide doors upon thy mortal walls;
And gleams of Heaven shine upon thy way;
A visionary glory on earth falls!
And like the humble pris'ner, thy thought sings!
And dreams of Paradise, and dazzling wings!

LOVE AND YOUTH.

Vines robed it, with a tremulous, flickering
green;
It stood o'erflowered with the rose between
The sprays where oft a bird hung, with a note
To which the mild sky, with one star afloat,
Listened—the wall where we were used to meet,
And talk, when May and Love and Youth were
sweet!
Bursting in blossom! Could dumb stone feel
pride
At your white hand upon it? thrill, beside,
Under your heart beats? for the birds knew!
each,
Warbling and wooing, matched your tender
speech—

Bird-pipe and love-note to my soul! Still sing
They 'mid their balmy boughs and blossoming;
And stands the old wall, dream-like, 'neath sprays
tost
To breeze and sunlight—only we are lost!

SLEEP.

Soft fall upon mine eyelids, gentle Sleep,
Like rain of roses! though I wake to weep,
Quiet my heart!

Bring on thy wings that peace that day denies,
The dewy balm that with the morrow flies;
And then depart!

Love hath its own sweet joy and dear delight:
And Thought its aery blisses, fancy light!
Dearer thou art!

PROMETHEUS.

The Gods, above, within their shining fields
A sheet of trembling blossom to the marge
Of heaven's brooks gleaming beneath fruit trees;
'Mid song and glow and fragrance of the rose,
Stretched in Elysian ease, regard this world:
Create and mar, at will; lift to their love
Some dazzled and adoring shepherd prince!
Seat him in power above the island kings:
Till wanton falls he, in the lust of eye,
Ruling his golden court; forgets the dues,
The amber wine, and precious gums, lilies,
Or dewy herbs, or sacred sacrifice
Of the white oxen of the lowing herd,
Allotted the Divinities supreme.
Then fall the thunderbolts from flashing heaven,

Upon the race. Their children innocent,
For ages, to vengeance are sacrificed!
But I who love men only! love to death!
I brave ye, oh, Olympians! and will leave
This quiet vale of myrtles, and the fields
Familiar, this sweet, still, pastoral life,
The home, and household love, harvest, and spring
With murmuring bees, and balmy breath of buds,
To struggle with ye for this race I love!

LOVE.

Like trembling echoes of forgotten music,
Faint, balmy odors of rose leaf, like dreams,
The first bird notes by tremulous, glimmering streams,
Soft melancholy born of Beauty, light
Of dazzling spheres, thou comest, spirit bright!
O'er earth and sky thy light and radiance shine!
On vales enchanted, breathing buds divine!

THE FIRST KISS.

All through the fragrant evening ran a sound,
A piping shrill and lone, the meek complaint
Of some warm-breasted bird left desolate!
And hearing, soft we parted the white boughs,
Beneath a show'r of brittle, snowy leaves,
And found, within, a little, empty nest
Wrought fine and fair, and warm as a true heart
For sheltering Love: her balmy cheek near mine:
And frequent came that simple sound of grief:
One wistful tear fell, and her bosom heaved!
We turned amid the blossoms, dewy-sweet—
And with a touch, eyes fell, and our lips met!

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY.

No more doth smile the blushing earth
Since my love's gone to rest!
She took the sunshine in her hair,
The lilies on her breast;
Bright roses died to make her fair,
With glories of the west!

* * * * *

The glowing leaves oped sweet for her,
With silent pearls of dew;
The violets, beneath her eyes,
Sprung from the sod and grew—
Gazing upon those azure skies!
A sheet of tender blue!

The daisy shone beneath her tread
In fields with blossoms drest,

Wooing the wind with lovely mirth;
Now close each leaf is prest!
No more doth smile the rosy earth
Since my love's gone to rest!

AN ANTIQUE GEM.

Borne swiftly by the dazzling chariot wheels,
Her out blown hair starred with bright buds, her arms
Half loosened from her fragrant spoil of flowers
New opened 'neath the honeyed dews, star-bright
In her dark lover's arms, Persephone
Shrinks frighted: all the glowing buds and bells
Shut fast their golden eyes! their warm bloom pales,
Beneath the shadow of the wingèd steeds!
And runs a shudder through the flowery earth
At sight of beauty on the breast of Dis!

LINES.

My tender song, fly from my heart away
Unto that Lady whom Love honoreth;
And flute and sing to her, my song, and pray
Her to list to thy golden notes—Love saith
Thy little wings she hears—as on a rose
The bee clings, so with thy melodious close
Seek thou a lovely haven on her breast,
And rise and fall e'er, with its soft unrest.

My song, say to her that thy beauty grew
From her eyes; and if sweet and innocent
She find thee, thou dost dear delight renew
Near her; from her meek loveliness is lent
Joy to thy singing; and that Love our Lord—
Most pitiful to him who holds adored
Her gentle self—bade thee, with wish confessed,
To flutter forth, and seek that Lady's breast.

LOST LOVE.

From the green sward, the Spring will call the flowers,
With low voice of the wind: all faded forms,
Brown stalk and withered leaf, will spring in bowers
Renewed, in dewy fragrance. Gilded swarms
Of butterflies will float, on glancing wing!
Once more, 'mid orchard boughs, the linnet sing!

But O fond soul, no more shall e'er return
Thy fading May, the purple violet!
Thy sun no more o'er blooms and sweet fields burn!
Thy looks on me are dim, thine eyes are wet.
Love lost, and glittering youth untimely gone,
Scant, lingering years remain for thee to mourn!

THE VOYAGE.

1600.

Set sail! and tempt the great deeps of the sea,
Once more, friends of my heart! where blossoming,
In rosy waters, wild with tossing vine,
With bud and golden fruit and lilies gemmed,
With boughs hung with a rosy treasure, sward
Set thick with flowers, and the fragrant air
Flashing with wings, and sweet with gurgling songs
From tiny throats, the Western Isles shine bright,
Over the glittering sea, our course set! for
The world is opening out before us, rise
The shining heavens to a higher sphere!
And life is infinite! Here, ancient ways,

Old tales, known paths shut in upon us: here
The street, and fountain, and old household talk,
The quiet closes, and the doleful bell
To toll the end of all things—there, the stretch
Of boundless waters, and a widening sky,
And great Hope leading us! Ye mariners,
Bold brows, and brother hearts! let the wind take
Our sails, and white drifts foam about our side:
Lift we one white star on our prow, and sail,
Beyond this world, out on the sounding seas!

PAGE'S SONG.

Violets, earliest in the year,
  Cover a green bank bright with May:
Ope, fragrant—an orbed dew drop clear
  In each blue heart: gone in a day!
  But waits the bank all year for May!

One moment leant she on my breast—
  Then left the tremulous heart she thrilled!
Pain followed her, my bosom's guest:
  But Love sings still, with rapture filled!
And broods above the empty nest!

LETHE.

Shadowy, glimmering, 'mid pale amaranths,
The dim, mysterious stream went from its source,
Deep in a sunless land, and to its side
Pressed countless, pallid shapes. With hope, despair,
And resignation meek, they stooped to drink
Its mystic waters! when its bubbles touched
The lip, they smiled in mute forgetfulness:
And those who wept lingered—yet drank! Among
Those faint shapes saw I, suddenly, her who
Held my heart through all fires of anguish; veiled
Her brow and breast save where the golden locks

Shone o'er one shoulder, on her passionate heart
Lay lilies of white peace. She stooped—"O stay!"
I cried—"Drink not, love! lo, miserable we!
All's lost—life, green fields of earth, sun and stars,
And our far palace by the blue sea! naught
Remains but love—so we would have it, in
Our pain and passion; and passed! in great light,
And music—O the gods! the pitiless gods!
Take not love, also! do not drink!" but she
Came to my side, and kissed my brow, and called
Me by my name of past days, and raised to
My lips the cup—"Drink, love," she said—her voice
Made melody to my soul as of old:
Her eyes were veiled—"Drink!" "Do ye wish it, then?"
I cried, "Francesca, do ye wish it?" Sighs
Shook the pale lilies at her breast: once more

She raised the dewy cup within her palms,
The limpid water sparkled at its brim,
"Drink!" said she softly—then tears fell within
The chalice, mingling with the crystal draught!

IN SILENT NIGHT.

In silent night, the rose her glowing head
Bows shadowy, and one lost pearl falls bright
From 'midst her radiant leaves! The bulbul, led
By love, sings to her hushed heart his delight.
The winds breathe soft; their gentle murmurs fail:
She hears and dreams, under her shining veil;
And 'neath his love, she dawns, in answering light

IRENE.

With rose-carnations breathing on the air
The spices of the East, of bowers fair
Where walked the Sultan's daughter, golden-
veiled;
With milk-white lilies; roses whose sweets failed,
Two days blown; with a silver, bubbling stream
Winding, 'midst reed and iris, its bright gleam;
Her perfumed garden blooms. The wicket wide
Opes; but she walks not 'mid the lilies' pride!
Yet she has left a glory on the grass:
A beauty on the flowers that saw her pass,
When, on the quiet eve, rose the first star
Within the tranquil heaven blue and far!

MAY MORNING.

Amid an ash-tree, bending o'er a stream,
A little pool of quivering shade and gleam
Half hidden by wild flowers, its waters bright
By the breeze blown in curling ripples light,
While ruddy leaves which from the rose-tree fall
Drifted adown its shallows; a sweet call
I heard, a sudden cry, a sylvan note!
A jocund voice upon the breeze afloat!

No sweeter note of gladness have I heard
E'en when with warbling rapture of each bird
Rejoiced the golden hours of infancy;
When dawned the day in splendor, sympathy
With every flower that trembled on the green:
And this chance music of a joy unseen
Mingling Delight with shadowy Memory,
Will live, fore'er, in pensive thought for me!

SPRING SONG.

Where boughs are glistening and white
With dewy buds, and banks are bright
With violets, a little spring
Glasses green rushes, and bird wing
That dips its silver breast and clear—
With rosy hours, awakes the year!

Swallow! from blue seas, sunset-springs,
Flying this way! pear blossom flings
Wide star rays white; and orchard trees
Dream of small nests, swung by the breeze,
Thrush-note, and fairy pipe, and bee
Murmuring a quiet melody!

TRIUMPH OF DEATH.

When thou art gone the rain will fall; the wind
Blow its clear trumpet from the east; the year
From dewy April, bud and blossom twined,
To the ripe season of still days, nights clear,
Gold rinded fruit, and purple grape, and trees
O'er-laden with Hesperian gold, acorn,
And harvestings, and amber hoard of bees,
Will slow advance. Still will the radiant morn
Rise o'er the dewy earth; live all delight,
Stars, waves, and winds, and the birds' melodies,
The crescent moon through wan clouds glittering
bright,
And the long sighing of the perfumed breeze,
Mysterious waters murmuring in the night:
All Beauty, all Delight will, rich, live on
When thou, who blushest Beauty's self, art gone!

EARTH'S MYSTERIES.

There is a flow'r I love, I know not why!
It springs when May slides, with a balmy show'r
Of sweet buds, from a rosy cloud to earth,
With star of eve and rose and butterfly;
And yearning tears oppress me when that flow'r
Starts from the dewy sod, a lovely birth!

Could I tell where the rose of yestermorn
Now blooms, where are thy kisses and thy tears,
Whither the splendor-wingèd Hours fly,
Then not unmindful I should cherish on
That flow'r that under windless skies appears,
The little flow'r I love, I know not why!

SONG.

Love, honeyed rose, the breathing flower for all!
But for me my tears, at her knees! the bee
May find a ruby cup, a dazzling breast,
To hover o'er, which the rapt bird sings to—for me
The heart never to be possessed! the cold, sweet eyes!
The moonlight beauty, passionless o'er my sighs!

AN APPARITION.

Alone, beside the dying fire, I sat:
Wind, rain without—hunger and cold within!
When she came knocking—"Who is there?" I
cried.
"Do you not know!" she answered, and came in,
And knelt beside me, with my hands in hers,
Hid in her beauteous hair; and then I knew
Where'er she came from, what strange, faery
land,
Beside a haunting sea, she loved me! could
Not rest from me! but came gliding back just
To see what sorrow now I suffer, draw
My head within her arms, or kiss the new
Scar on my brow—she loved me so! The fire
Falls, raves the wind without, I sit alone:
And she is queening it, at some court-feast,

Out there, shining 'neath torches; jewel starred!
Beside the ancient Duke who wedded her,
Last year—the world is hers! How the wind
wails!
And comes a sound of sobbing on its breath!

CIRCE.

From brake of roses issuing, she came;
Her white robes fluttering to breeze, and flower
Set gem-like in the sunny sward: and passed
To deepest nook of the dim forest old,
A covert dusked from slipping, sunbeam gold
O'er lilies white; and where the fern and rush
And ivy grew wild, 'neath the hanging boughs
Breeze stirred above, in arches dark—where once
A bird piped sweet and high and lone! with trill
Of elfin mirth; below, in waters clear,
Sweeping a little runnel, silver-bright;
With reed and flag flow'r nodding o'er its shallows
Crystal. A sylvan pipe held she, shut in
One white hand; and ere long set it to lips,

Like buds of blush rose, and made melody
Strange, weird, bewildering! a trembling strain
That hushed breeze, bird and leaf; and filled the wood
With dim enchantments! golden hazes! So,
Piping, she went: and slowly from the shades,
With laggard paw, and crouching back, and dim
Eyes wistful on her face, a wizard rout
Snouted, tusked, bestial! brutes, yet men in love
For their enchantress mistress came, strange shapes!
And grovelled at her feet: the while she played,
Happy in power and charms! and longing for
The hour when she would snare Ulysses, in
Her toils of magic, and of loveliness!

SONG.

Ah, why should sorrow linger in the rose?
Beam with the first star in the sapphire sky?
Dwell in the sparkling glance of her we love?
Ah, why should we be born to weep, to die?

True, heaven were best, but earth is flushed with June:
We love—but soon to death we, restless, turn:
The flowering sod, the crystal star on high—
We pluck the flow'r, 'tis ours! starward we yearn.

HYMN TO DIANA.

Where art thou, Queen of the sky,
Shepherdess of heavenly flocks
Wand'ring aery lilies by?
Dost, with amber, floating locks
Dripping from the crystal pool,
Thy white limbs, immortal, cool
In the rippling waters, 'mid
Woodland nymphs, in forest hid:
In the brakes where buds the rose,
And the doves of Aphrodite
Wing through branches gnarled, where grows
Ivy tendril, spring the bright
Lilies, rain-washed; while serene
Light vaunts Deity, unseen?

Wand'rest by the purple sea,
Where the frisking dolphins play?
Or upon some grassy lea,
Smooth and soft, where white flocks stray
Feeding 'mid dew and sweet flowers,
Dost thou spend thy honied hours?
While thy nymphs, for thy delight,
Weave in mazy measures light!
Come, Belovèd! On the sea
Hesperus, arising bright,
Heralds thy divinity!
Wander down the heavens white!
Constellated flowers shine
On the deep meads, crystalline.

ORION.

When Morning oped her gates of pearl, and
shone,
In tremulous and growing splendor, o'er
The dawning east, and dewy earth, the sheets
Of lily and the fields of daffodil,
Green hills, and flower-sweet meads, and choirs
of birds,
With music of the morning star and May;
Looming against the misty, purple hills,
Orion rose and journeyed towards the sun.
Blind groping, stood he, with his feet in flowers,
The mealy gold of meadow blooms, his brows
Against the spangled east; and listened to
A thrush that 'mid the valley lilies sent
Its sweet morn music up to the clear sky.

The mighty bow swayed from his listless hand:
His giant shadow hung on the bright grass:
And slow his stumbling steps went towards the
east
Over the dark earth, where Apollo soon
Would climb the golden pathways of the dawn,
'Mid song and worship and fore-running light.

WHITHER FLIES MY HEART?

Ah, whither flies my heart? I see again
The stream, the hill, the flowering garden trees!
And in the silence, some enchanted bird
Sings—her small, sheltered cottage see I—then
Comes the soft music of the sighing breeze.
No longer may her gentle voice be heard:
Her bow'rs are empty—and she dwells apart!
Ah, whither flies my heart?

Ah, whither flies my heart? the nightingale,
Each spirit of the spring, seeks its sweet mate
Upon the golden, visionary earth
Of dreams—with May, I linger in her vale,
But fields, and wood, and green are desolate!
No more for me triumphal love or mirth!
They've borne my love to foreign lands apart!
Ah, whither flies my heart?

EPILOGUE.

'Tis ended! they lie dead there, side by side!
His arm thrown o'er her head, whose great, gold locks
Hang, hide their faces from mine eyes. Now, may
I free her from his languid clasp—embrace
Her neck—trembling to touch its snow! and kiss
The rose-like lips, so flower-soft: may possess
Her dead, who loved me not—never was mine!
Lift the white lids, and wonder at the blue
Heaven, shrouded from the light; and gather up,
With tender hands, this fragrant, glittering flood,
Her hair—for they lie dead, there, in their love!
And I live who have seen this hour advance,
Slow, step by step, with shrouded eyes, until
Its footfalls echoed, hollow, on our hearts.

So pure, so childlike in her sleep! Sinned they?
Was the fault mine? or in this death-blind house,
Walks Fate, gigantic, awful? Had I died,
Who had not love or youth; and left the sun
To them—were it well? Vengeance, tastes it sweet?
Beholding their white faces whom I loved?
At least, they are at peace! for e'en 'mid death
I see the hues of sorrow on her cheek,
'Neath her shut eyes: and brother-like, he loved
Me, ere he fell; knighted and given to God.
Bring torches! lift them up, and bear them hence
To the dim choir, where the sunlight falls
In silver beams, the silence breathes of prayer,
And the great angels burn, in glittering rows!
Massed, breaking from the shadow, in gold light.
Cover the lovers with pale rose drift: lay
Them side by side; and leave them there, with God.
Tread softly! for they lie as if asleep!

SONG.

Lute strings, and rose, and blue sky o'er!
In fifty years could we love more?
Is't ay or no?

A star that bends, the mere above!
What is our life worth without love?
Wilt let love go?

A bee that seeks the rose in flower!
And life is love, and love an hour
Of Heaven, below!

ALLEGORY.

A lonely sea, my soul!
Land-locked 'mid mountains high:
Abysmal depths that roll
O'er gold and pearl—the sky
Far, clear above: a voice
When the waves plunge: but deep,
Silent, serene as sleep!
A lonely sea, my soul!

Thy love, a torrent bright,
A glittering, rainbow stream,
Down the white rocks takes flight;
With pearly foam, and gleam,
Falls to the silent wave
That breaks in diamond light,
From out the winter night—
The lonely sea, my soul!

HELEN.

Across white seas, with storm and sweep of sails,
Men bore me, from flowery Ionian vales,
To towered Troy; and my great beauty fell
Like sunlight, dazzling, blinding, o'er their eyes,
In my youth, honey-sweet! Most beautiful,
Most hapless I! for now the clash of spears,
The hollow, brazen echoes of wild war
Roll o'er the plains, and stately walls of Troy!
The Gods take part in the hot struggle! men
And heroes perish, for my beauty's blight!
And like the shrieking of storm driv'n sea-birds,
Far, warning voices clamor over Troy!
Hear thou, O Goddess who did'st make me prize
To golden Paris, never let me see

Again him whose unsullied hearth I left
To desolation: nor the faces loved
Of that fair, noble kindred I have lost,
Whate'er betide my beauty and my woe!

SONG.

Come up from the red east, O sun,
With the wild wind of dawn!
Thy wondrous steeds awake and guide,
In rosy steps of Morn!
The fields are decked thy glance to meet,
With flowers sweet.

Spread forth thy blushing light o'er all
The spangled, orient sky!
While faint and fail the golden lights
Made heaven clear, on high.
The world wakes; far each shadow steals
From thy bright wheels!

MAGIC.

Bright streams her lighted casement on the night,
Through dewy boughs—beneath her garden lies,
Of rose, and lily bright, and starry eyes,
Fair flowers of light! and here the moss-grown
wall,
A-stir with quivering leaves! and at my call,
Stone, mortar, hasp, circle of angry friends
With wisdom of the world—"Begin! where ends
This madness? will you list this song of roads?
Nor think what love of the wild bird forebodes?"
I think all these should not keep her! but know,
This very night, if I would have it so,
I might take her for life eternal! all!
Soul, brow, still eyes, and heart—if I would call!

WILD ROSES CRADLE SOFT THE GOLDEN BEES.

Wild roses cradle soft the golden bees,
Or daisies, silver cups of dew, or blooms,
Bright blossoms of the fragrant orchard trees,
Or lily, where in perfumed, starry glooms,
The imprisoned wings, streakèd with gold, may gleam.

For orient pearls, and rosy, secret bowers,
Murmur the banded lutanists, with sound
As of soft rain on grass and joyous flowers!
Of whispering winds, or dreaming seas profound,
Or falling fountains, in a crystal stream!

THE LAST CONQUEROR.

All my life long, I knew I must confront
Him—but I never dreamed the hour so near!
Beneath the golden sky, and orchard boughs
Faint blossom flushed and musical with wings—
When life, a stream, slipped down, a silver line,
Past reed, and flag, and lily clear as air,
Leaves crystalline, out, with a sudden foam,
From the blue pebbles to the river's rush!
The sea seen, far off, with its whitening sails,
Its foam crests rushing in to flowery isles,
Enchanted, on its breast. I never thought
That, sudden, wild the trumpets would ring
forth!
Would ope the empty, ringing lists! and in
A misty dream, I should be set to meet—
No paladin, or shining knight—but him

The horror of whose name the lightest shakes:
The echoes of whose footfalls chill the heart—
The Giant. Now, at last, 'tis to be done!
No fainting! no wild outcry—if you will
Clutch one gold bough to bear away—but turn!
For he waits not for seeking: he is here!
Here—and the sky is gone, and earth is lost,
And the fierce trumpet blasts, and shrieks the wind,
And all his mighty coming through the earth
Resounds—his great arm rears—now, struggle up!
Now, Tancred, pay the earth for all the bliss
Hoarded and spent on thee: the battle comes!
Hold fast—and meet him—and be overthrown!

SONGS OF THE FOREST.

I.

Fair star that bring'st the quiet eve,
Soft ere the rising moon stream bright!
Earth waits thy beam, star of hushed breeze,
And balm, of pensive, shadowy light!
Come, planet clear of closing day,
Star of the homeward way!

Thou dost all gentle pleasures bring,
Star of soft peace: home to its nest
The wild bird; from sweet fields the bee:
Dost lead the weary heart to rest.
On youthful passion shin'st above,
Thou silvery star of Love!

II.

Now all the budded woods are green,
And the deep, windy east flames bright,
And buds in mossy ways are seen,
Bright leaves, and lily cups of light!
Pearled wind-flowers 'mid the grass are set,
'Neath white boughs springs the violet.

Now flowers every sunny lea,
And wild notes greet the dawning blue,
From dewy sod and bright fruit-tree;
And blossoms trembling joy anew,
With azure leaf and balmy breath
It starts from sleep, and the year's death.

III.

Lo! the light shoots in the east!
And the dawn breaks cold and clear:
O'er the misty, sparkling hills
The sun's blushing beams appear.

ABSENCE.

Beneath thine eyes my happy eyelids fall,
Nor can I take thy close, sweet kiss, nor call
Thee "Dear Beloved!" nor say "I love thee,"
In the heart-voice like the bird's melody;
When thou art near, and thy sunlight's above
My shadow—dew on my flow'rs—leave me,
Love!
As the leaves tremble when the bird has flown,
So my heart pulses when I am alone
To live o'er, in sweet thought, thy last embrace,
And dwell, in memory, upon thy face.

THE QUESTION.

When ladies bright shall tempt thee with their
smiles,
Their silver brows, sweet speech, and lovely
wiles,
Wilt thou muse: "Dearer far to me her look
When she is silent: as a running brook
In mossy ways, her still voice: and her eyes
Downcast, and blush, and virgin fear, I prize
More than rose-lips, or glance of sunny eyes?"

MAY.

Grass-green and flashing blue of May,
With leafage, rose-bloom, ferny spray:
A bower safe to meet together,
Thick, green and flow'r flushed by the weather:
Sunshine that, splendid, floats above
The budding flowers—thy smile, Love!

SONG FOR MUSIC.

Come to me in my dreams!
Ah Love! the day is long
That with sweet buds, perfume, and the wren's
song,
Dawns glimmering at the lattice! sinks to rest
Dim, silent, starry, in the rosy west!
Come to me in my dreams!

Come to me in my dreams!
I may not love thee! fear
To meet thine eyes as in a mirror clear,
In faery thought—but longing grows to pain
To touch thy treasured hand! greet thee again!
Come to me in my dreams!

But come to me in dreams!
With memory of all sweet
And silent places haunted by our feet,
With dewy splendor of those morning skies,
With the delight of meeting lips and eyes:
Sweet! come to me in dreams!

A THOUGHT.

Flow'rs, music are the slaves of Memory:
And with a scent, a tone, they will set free
Thoughts, too swift for slow speech, that like a flower
Fall at a touch! from rose-crown of the Hour!

ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE.

First he who by such fearful, unknown ways
Had come to that drear place of shades, of woe,
Of lapping waters faintly heard, as in
The night beside a lonely sea, strained 'gainst
The gloom his longing eyes that saw faint shapes,
The drooping head of Proserpine where clung
One vernal bud, with honied, radiant cup,
And Furies, by their pallid torches' shine,
Shaking upon black night their horrent hair—
But nowhere those belovèd eyes he sought!
So, mourning, struck the trembling harp-strings: soft
The harp notes sighed with his unyielding sorrow!
But sorrow woke a mighty, echoing voice

That with the melancholy chords of earth
Resounded; and the singer paused aghast,
With fainting heart. Then soft and low, he played
A melody as waters whispering 'mid
The standing sedges in a pool, and sang—
With pauses sweet! of distant earth, of homes,
And hearth-fires, and the fields of happy men,
The swallow in the eaves, the spongy meads
Eyed with sweet blooms, and blowing winds of spring,
Of golden harvests, and sweet slumber lulled
By murmuring bees, and winds, and shepherd's pipe,
And all the happy music of the vales,
Of simple life, and joys inherited,
And humble beauty 'neath the evening star.
So sang he; and a silence fell on all!
On those who wailed, and on the fearful shapes
Of woe and horror: and the breathing dawn,
With pipe of birds, and rustling of green leaves,

Sweet scents from white fields blown, and amber skies,
Shone in that desolate place. Slow-stealing tears
Fell from the anguished eyes, and pallid lips
Smiled as the tears fell: then with bated breath,
He made a murmur sweet that was one name!
Hope, life, death, anguish, fear and ecstasy!
A cry that pierced high Heaven, and sank to Hell—
"Eurydice! Eurydice!" again,
And ever the lament—"Eurydice!"
Till Love took that name, and re-echoed it,
Through all the woes of Hell, "Eurydice!"
So ended. Soft, with mild looks bent on him,
Spoke the dark Lord of Hell, "Thou who bringest
Hope here where rules Despair! and Love where Fear
And Vengeance ride the blast! thou who didst bend
Thy painful footsteps, from the happy earth,

To misty fields, and ice-bound, desolate waste
Untrod by living foot—hast conquered death
And the dark grave through love. Return thou to
The fields of day; and thy belovèd one
Shall follow—only look not back at her!
Content thee with the sound of her light feet
Echoing thine; for if thou dost look, wilt
Lose her forever from thine arms! begone!
Lo, thou hast wrung love from the iron breast
Of Pluto—but the ancient Night resumes
Her dreaded sway." Ended the God, and rose
A fearful wail from all the vales of Hell:
From barren, frozen cliffs, and fiery pool;
And the dread wastes, haunted by drifting shapes!
Then Orpheus turned and, singing, went his way
Back to the gates of life; for thought he—"If
I pour my heart's great longing into song—
And listen not to those soft footfalls! I
May gain the light; and turn not round to clasp

Her whom I kissed within her shroud, in one
Long, passionate embrace—then let the sky
And earth crash in together!" So he went,
Hearing, in anguish, her light footfalls, near;
Her sighs heaving her bosom with desire
And tender longing—nay, at times almost
Halting, hushed, hopeful, for her arms to close
About his head, with kisses wild and sweet,
And sad—as men embrace the fancied dead
Who rouse to life from three days' trance, and look,
With alien eyes, on the affairs of life.
So sang he: but it chanced that to his lips
There rose a little song that he had made
Beneath the glimmering rose of the bright eve
When the veiled bride was brought home to his doors,
With chants and wreaths and dazzling chariot wheels;
And this he sang, unthinking, with full heart!
Yet smitten with a sudden fear if this

Were his fair wife, or a thin, aching shade
That followed, light? dear either way! but longed
He utterly for her loved eyes and lips,
And tender voice: and he sang, he heard
A passionate sigh that, dying, breathed his name;
And knew her near him! Pierced with the faint sound
Of her remembered tones, and with the thought
She sorrowed to have come so far without
Sign of his love, he yielded! Joyful, awed,
Thrilled with divine love, he turned back, and looked
With blissful tears at his Eurydice!
And leapt a cry, and stretched their longing arms
In fond joy: but ere they had looked their fill,
Or kissed, back sank the lovely shade in night!
The gentle gift was caught back to the Gods!
No more to earth returned Eurydice!

A DREAM.

I had a dream of roses, and of buds
Of April, honey-sweet, of hyacinth,
Of trembling bells, of lilies in whose plinth
The bee hides, pastoral daisies, field stars sweet!
O'er which hover clear dews, and gold wings
fleet!
A dream of meadows fair as Paradise!
Windless, and blossoming with flowery eyes!

BIRD-FLIGHT.

First fled the swallow, Youth, that wings away
With budding rose, and halcyon hours of May:
Then Love, the enamored nightingale that sings,
In myrtle bower enchanted: then fleet wings,
A sky of daffodil, and Hope had flown:
Last, chanting, the swan, Memory, had gone,
Drifting down silent waters to the sea
That rises and ends in a mystery!

SINGING.

My song, be like the violet
That trembles bright
Upon a nodding bank exhales
Its perfume light!

My song, be like the star that gleams
In deepest blue,
'Neath which the faint rose, odorous, glows
In radiant hue!

My song, be like the mourning bird,
That with its love
O'erflows lush boughs, with couplets soft
As voice of dove!

CONFESSION BEFORE DEATH.

That night of the Duke's solemn feast, we met,
Unseen. She paused—I heard her murmur low
My name. "O lady, what will ye of him
Whose very heart beats in your service?" Mute,
Beneath her glittering veil, she stayed a pause
Sweeter in tremulous silence than the voice
Of Music! then she spoke—"Here is a world
Of men and women—not one knows of that
Great, golden chalice, sacred passion that
Our lips desire! lo, standest there—not thou
But Love! Love, radiant, blinding! Kneelest thou?
Must I speak further? lips utter the tale
My heart hath beaten at thy slightest glance,
The lightest, lingering touch of thy hand? Rise
Thou—take me! here is anguish, here despair!
But here is life immortal—deathless love!"

THE SHEPHERD.

I.

LAST NIGHT.

Last night, I heard the nightingale!
It waked me from a dream;
From leafy bow'rs rang its sweet wail,
'Neath the moon's amber beam,
Last night, I heard the nightingale!

Last night, I heard the nightingale!
I woke and wept for love;
It mourned amid the blossoms pale;
White stars looked from above;
Last night, I heard the nightingale!

II.

SUNSET.

The sun goes down, far in the west,
And leaves woodland and vale to rest:
Thou weary heart, what tears are thine?
'Mid glittering mists, and the clouds' shine,
The sun goes down!

III.

NYMPHS AND SWAINS.

By the streams, in meadows fair,
Did I meet my love a-playing!
In the spring, when lovers young
'Mid the green wheat fields were straying!
Pipe, sweet shepherd! life's a pearl
Trembles for a lovely hour
On the leaves of summer's flower—
Vanishes then, us betraying!
While our hearts with Love are maying!

THE HESPERIDES.

Thick-foliaged, with a sunlight silvered bole,
Deep with winged, tremulous leaves, bright with clear dews,
And musical with songs of the soft breeze,
Aflame with glowing buds, and blooms, and fruit
Sparkling in green glooms, lifting boughs a-sheen
Beneath the sky of dawn, and rosy light,
The magic tree stood, circled by the fair
Hesperides. Leaf-shade and blossom touched
Their white limbs, shone upon a gleaming arm
And thick folds of gold hair: above them soared
The dazzling dragon-head from its bright coils,
Crowned with pale fire of silver light o'er all
The jewels of its shining wreath: and sweet,
From out the clustering bud and blossom, came

Their voices faint drifting with fragrant winds,
Seaward; as under star, and leaf, and fruit
Golden upon the bough, they guarded safe
The magic tree, from root to bowery head.

SHE BEARS A JEWEL ON HER BREAST,

She bears a jewel, on her breast,
Not clearer than her eyes! a light
Still, emerald! a splendor bright,
A lustre strange! In her calm face
There lives the memory of that place
Where she dwelt long, in mystery,
The misty radiance 'neath the sea,
The dark joy of the mountains, chill
And ice-crowned, the light of the still,
Clear moon, and the wild song of death
A lover sang, with failing breath!

THE ROBIN.

Voice of the dawn, minstrel of vernal days,
Pitiful spirit of old, plain romance,
Thou cheerful gossip of the beechen ways,
Love-lutanist, whose sylvan notes enhance
Delights of May! among the gusty trees,
Thy blithe cries utter! echoed from each glade
That flings a warm perfume to the soft breeze:
Wing, fluting through the golden lights and
shade!

Silent, dost bob and dance, on orchard lawn,
In rustic minuet! with golden bill,
And shining eye, and happy grace. Each dawn
Hears thy blithe calls from sylvan green and hill.
Loved wast thou of old poesy, blest bird!
Spirit of wood and field! and that sweet art,

That finds fair thoughts in every flower, heard
Thy friendly voice, and gave to thee a heart
Of heavenly true love unto mortals, whence
Flowed pity, woe, mysterious reverence!

NIGHT SONG.

Silence, O fond bird, that from leafy bower,
Star-hung and perfumed by the odorous breeze,
Pourest thy sweet notes in a silver shower,
A crystal rain of dropping melodies!
The flow'rs awake beneath the sparkling cloud
That earthward bends with fragrant, gentle dew,
A shining mist above the green hills bowed
Till morn, ascending, blushes in the blue.

Soft, soft, ye airy voices! wandering
Mid moss-grown paths, and folded bud and bloom,
Beneath the golden whirl, the glittering ring
Of sister stars; in leafy secret gloom,
A stream makes music, and winds answer light;
And dreams the tremulous lily; and above
Sings the enamoured spirit of the night
That radiant, faint with blossoms, breathes of love!

PERDITA.

With faintest sunlights in thy hair
Of gossamer gold, and still, blue eyes,
Thou comest when the moon is old,
And thickest dark obscures the skies.

Thou lookest on me, and thine eyes
Are still and soft and dewy-clear:
Thy footsteps echo, angel-wise,
Upon my memory's shadowy stair.

Until the Past awakes, and rings
With sunken faery bells again:
The fount of youth enchanted springs:
And nightingales sing in my brain.

VISIONS.

From dreams of thee I wake,
When night is o'er!
With thoughts of thee I greet the light;
And all the memories of the night,
Like faint scents of pale violets dead,
Like sweet notes when the music's fled,
Hover about my waking hours;
A fragrance from enchanted bowers!

From thoughts of thee I turn,
When day is o'er!
Sleep brings a vision to my eyes,
And stirs my beating heart with sighs;
Till love and life and all delight,
Like an embowered rose, in night
Are lost: joy wings: and all things die
Save only thee and memory!

PHOSPHOR, HESPER.

O Morning star, that sparklest in dawn's blue
Above the beds of violets and dew,
With soft delight my love's sweet breath renew.

O Evening star, that where the west is bright
With rose lights, hangest, harbinger of night,
Pilot her sleep from dark to dewy light.

PERSEPHONE IN HADES.

Drooping upon her throne, Persephone
Eyed with dim looks the brooding darkness near;
And heard the river eddies rippling led
To misty banks of amaranth and pale
Lilies of faint Elysium; and her heart
Passioned for meads of Enna, flower-sweet!
Young buds, and dewy flowers, and the dome
Of the blue skies, the faint star of the morn,
Clear drops of dew, the song of soaring birds
In the white dawn, and odor-breathing winds:
Dreaming, she listened for voices of nymphs,
In pleasant vales, and river lawns. Beside
Her, leaned dark Pluto, and his trembling words,
Whispered her close and sweet, were all unheard;

With promise of fair flowers as she lost
'Neath kinder skies—rose leaf and daffodil!
Of all the splendors of the halcyon earth—
So she would lift her fainting head! and 'neath
His kiss, the last flower clinging to her locks—
Sole coronal of lorn Persephone!
Fell, with a shower of loose, odorous leaves!

DREAMS.

I.

One lonely bird that sings the rose,
A heaven of stars, a bee-like throng,
A breeze that o'er the lilies blows
And wakes them with its swaying long—
Is it dawn? or a vision of the night?
I cannot see for orchard blossoms bright
Fluttering before mine eyes! Heart, is it dawn?

II.

Let me dream.
Is it true I may search the world, nor find—
Wake, hopeful, with blue skies of dawn, grope, blind,
At night—her that stood here but yesterday?
Let me dream!

Let me dream!
I may find, say you? turf with daisies white—
Nay, but she glides in to me with the night;
And with the birth of dawn she steals away—
Let me dream!

III.

Green branch that thrusts its buds against the blue
Roof o'er us; moss banks violet wove, anew,
By spring; thy vesture all of flowers; day
Astir in the dim tracks and greenwood way:

The forest creatures near—the world afar!
Rich purple—silken silence—and a star
In heavens blue, Love o'er us! Men are gone?
Look down, my soul! through life and death, look on!

JACOB AT PENIEL.

When night climbed the dim sky, he crossed the ford
That eddying, sparkling, lay 'tween bank and bank;
And stood beneath dim cedar boughs and shades
Of myrrhy thickets. O'er the dark earth hung
One white star, 'mid thin mists: a sudden breeze
Went, breathing fragrance, through the gloom. Sounded
A rushing wind of winnowing wings, and lo!
As in the dreadful glory, turned the seer,
A glittering form stood in his way: and by
The river-ford, they wrestled through the night
Till paled the eastern star. Rock, tree, and sky

Swam in their eyes, with beating blood, and white
The silent skies stood over them! Their limbs
Locked in their struggle, till the sinews vast
Were knotted, and veins started: their long locks
Clung mingled: and the earth slipped from their feet:
And rent the stranger's robes that smelt of myrrh,
Were whiter than field-lilies! As he strove,
Did Jacob see the wrestler's countenance,
Dazzling, above him; and his starry dreams,
And skyey visions shone before his eyes,
While chilly fear urged him to loose his grasp
From the unearthly; but his manhood rose
In riot of hot blood! So all the night
They wrestled by the ford: when the clear dawn
Streaked the blue east, the stranger spoke and said,

"Thou hast prevailed, O mighty heart: loose
me:
For the dawn comes." Yet Israel cried,
Amid the weariness and grief of strife,
"Thy blessing, Lord!" and o'er his bowed head
lay
The haven of vast wings; and on his soul.

MAY AND LOVE.

In spring, with breath of violets,
My hopes bright blossomed, in mild air,
'Neath rosy cloud, and fragrant dew,
Soft sky, and sunny radiance fair!

Now blow the winds through dreamy woods,
And dim the cloudy, sunless sky;
And with the withered leaves of spring
My hopes drift from the bough to die!

PANDORA.

With fearful wonder, raises she the lid,
And through the sunny air, o'er her curled head
With violet and crocus garlanded,
As light as mazy rings of butterflies
The gifts and blessings to mankind flutter
On rosy, quivering wings; and vanish, bright,
Above the reach of empty, longing hands!
But on the fairest shuts the prisoning lid,
As with divine regret, and holy fear,
Pandora gains for earth the struggling hope!
To work with hope—sweet task! golden content!
But, kindly Gods, no gift gave ye to those
Who, hopeless, toil! Then grant them, O Immortals,

Your dauntless mind, and steadfast, heaven-born
courage,
To live on the dark earth as ye live in
Celestial, glittering halls of bright Olympus!

TO-MORROW.

Wilt thou bring to me what To-day denies,
O sweet To-morrow? sleep to weary eyes,
And joy and hope? I give To-day a tear;
But unto thee, To-morrow, thou more dear!
I lift the silent hope the blossoms know
When o'er their bedded seeds moist spring winds blow;
And the sod fed with bright dew trembles green,
'Neath flame and blue of skyey deeps serene.

LOVES OF THE GODS.

I.

Look from thy beaming sky, O Phœbus! now
While thy wild steeds advance, thy glorious brow
Shines on the budding fields of earth. Hast seen
'Mid all fond looks, of birds in bowers green,
Flower face, and mortal eyes, this heart of light
Enchanted! passionate, sun-like flower bright
That, constant, turns to thee its shining head,
Till all thy rosy, ebbing glow is fled;
Up to thee spreading each bright, restless leaf,
With virgin mind bending 'neath tender grief?

O wanderer of the skies! O singer sweet
To festal harpings clear for flying feet,

Of liquid chords, and lovely poesy
Honey sweet, joyous sounds, and revelry:
O Child of Heaven! beautiful and wise
With occult knowledge! Harkener of sighs
Of souls foreboding! Lord, thy heavenly art
Once more, hath drawn to thee a virgin heart!
Look down, gold-quivered son of supreme Jove,
To the dark earth, where shines a humble love.

II.

In yellow skies fair Hesper heralds night,
O'er valleys low raining his lovely light,
On fields, clear streams, arbors, and thickets wild
Eyed with the sweetest flowers. With radiance mild
Bright Phœbe rises. Her pale crescent gleams
O'er the dim forest old—pensive, she dreams
Its shadow that of Latmos; and its deeps
The forest brakes where her Endymion sleeps,
'Mid store of lilies, ever fair and young!
To rest by feathered, warbling choirs sung!

SONGS.

I.

Tears I weep that none may know!
At the mountains gaze I ever,
At the heights where lies the snow,
Where my wandering feet roam never:
Clouds glide, and the bird flies there,
Radiant sunsets hover fair!
Longing, gaze I from below,
Tears I weep that none may know!
Tears I weep!

II.

My heart was like the sun,
When dreamed I that you loved me!
My heart was like the sun,

Glittering, golden, streaming radiance o'er
The trembling buds, sweet leaves folded before—
My heart was like the sun!

* * * * *

My heart is like the sun,
Now you have ceased to love me!
My heart is like the sun
When, slow and fair, he sinks down from a sky
Whence all the glories, and wild radiance die—
My heart is like the sun!

III.

A cottage, small and fair, she has;
And over it I see
One serene star! white lilies silently
Shine in its light: a magic splendor gleams
In each pale calyx, glimmering in her dreams.

IV.

Turn back, O heart; from icy peak and height,
From misty torrent, waters glittering bright,
Unto thy native land!

There springs the violet, in bourgeoning vale,
And white flocks move, and gentle winds prevail,
Within thy native land!

V.

In a dream, I saw a maiden
By a fountain bright
That flowed, sparkling, 'neath boughs laden,
Magic leaves, milk-white:
Pale her cheek, her eyes were wild!
Yet on me, she gazed and smiled!
In a dream.

In a dream, I heard her sing
Songs enchanting sweet!
Combed she her locks, glittering
Down to her light feet:
Fairy of the fountain, she!
And she lured my soul from me!
In a dream.

VI.

My little songs, return to me!
With doves' wings fluttering on my heart!
Too long, I pine and sigh apart!
With faint notes of a fairy song,
Forgotten, rising clearer—throng,
On shining pinions, hither: tears
Well from my heart oppressed with fears:
My little songs, return!

VII.

O nightingale! O nightingale!
Deep in the dim woods dost thou sing;
And streams of lucid melody
Up from thy sad breast spring!

O nightingale! sweet nightingale!
In leafy covert dost thou mourn,
Till fade the star-flowers from the skies,
Before the crystal dawn!

VIII.

Love sings among the roses!
The silent moon above,
The quiet flowers listen,
And dream and breathe of love:
Love sings among the roses!

Love sings among the roses!
No rustle stirs the fields
Fragrant with radiant blossoms!
My breast to deep joy yields!
Love sings among the roses!

IX.

In the clear water at your feet,
There lies an image sweet!
Some lovely water-nymph for thee
Has left her pearls and foam of sea!

Here, at your feet, she weeps and sighs;
White garlands blind her eyes:

I draw you back—and she has fled!
The wave flows clear o'er the stream's bed!

X.

Day fades away, as sweet exhaleth
The fragrance of the rose!
The nightingale begins its song,
Through clouds a clear star glows:

And silent all the radiant day,
My song, with fresh delight,
Echoes the nightingale; and blooms
With the rose dewy-bright!

XI.

What sings the wondrous maiden?
Soft flows the crystal Rhine!
Her locks with lilies laden;
Her beauty half divine!
The gleaming harp, upon her breast,
Soft trembles in its lovely rest!

What dreams are on me glowing?
My heart beats loud and fast!
Wild melody is flowing
From her lips! O at last,
Let life and golden day go by—
I sink upon her breast to die!

FLIGHT OF POESY.

Thou dost evade my love: upon the air
The rose-leaves blown back from thy glittering hair
Show me the way did'st pass: when thou art gone,
Unwatched by me, uprises the clear dawn!
Joy flies, and Fancy pales, and Memory
Vibrates with tones I love, silent for me!

My idle harp falls from my hand: still sing
Its murmurous chords struck by thy rainbow wing:
And I may find thee in the depth of June,
With blossomed leas and blackbird's silver tune;
Where thou dost watch, all day, the running brook
Sungilt o'er pebbles blue, in leafy nook.

ELFIN-TOWN.

Faint, elfin horns that herald magic day;
A rosy dawn above a forest wild
Dream haunted by the memory of a child;
Rose lattices, white-glancing, aery towers
Of wings of butterflies and silver showers;
Walled gardens, blossom-flushed, fruit hung, with trees
That spring to sound of faery melodies;
Great flowers that glow and shine, a jewel bright
In each heart, violet banks, and moth wings light;
Birds on the glistening boughs; a flying mist
Of rainbow gold, and green and amethyst,
Like great wings, flashing o'er, of painted birds;
Moonbeams, bee songs, strange trees, and magic words;
Soft tones that love, and yearn afar, and weep,
With rippling, faery seas, and winds asleep!

BRIDAL SONG.

Pluck daffodil, lily and violet blue,
The pure rose brimming with the rain and dew!
All vermeil buds and flowery sweets adorn
Love's high festivity and happy morn!

Sing, pretty choirs, that in each hedgerow green
And fair branch gemmed with budding white,
are seen!
Thrush, linnet, blackbird pipe, in bushes gay,
To welcome in the blushing bridal day!

Rise, Phœbus, from the mist and spangled blue
Of dawn! ascend the crystal heavens anew!
Haste, rosy Hours! and weave a garland bright
With young Loves on the dial of their delight!

CLEOPATRA.

I.

CHANT FOR THE TEMPLE OF THE GODS.

O holy powers that sway our lives!
O mysteries!
Thou, Isis, veiled from mortal eyes:
Osiris, to whom from blue skies
The soul descends—great deities!
Before ye the heart trembles; and life hears
The sullen wash of seas across the years
That hedge us from eternity.

Not ye will passionate chant, or gums,
Sweet perfumes rare,
Or virgin beauty rosy glancing
From glittering veils, in dance advancing,
Propitiate, as offering fair!

But humble hearts and lives divinely led,
Star-like, shall light our way among the dead,
Unto your throne-foot, deities!

II.

SONG.

Faint scents like dreams, and perfumes sweet
That with winds from dim islands beat,
Fragrant on glittering seas, with white
Lotus half-opened on the night,
Waft with her sails silken, gold-bright!

Music attends her, and the sea,
Beneath her oars, glides silently,
And perfumed winds her white veils lift
That to her jeweled ankles drift—
Beauty, star-like, shines through the rift!

III.

ANTONY'S SONG.

Men gaze unto the East for dawn! and there,
Where one dim, slender palm rears, branching, fair,

And burning skies glow o'er the milk-white
sands,
My trembling heart returns from other lands—
Unto the East I look, and long for thee!

Heart, there is magic in the East! a charm
Of strange herbs, flowering trees, and fragrant
balm
Of lilies where the serpent coils—and there,
On the great Nile, a Lotus blossoms fair!
And from the East, the East! it shines on me!

PHANTOM.

Beneath the white moon silvering the branch
Of the wild rose-tree where a bird still sings;
Where odors rise from flushing blooms that blanch
In the pale beams; and the breeze, with light wings,
Hovers o'er blossom'd banks; her ghost will walk,
A faint mist 'gainst the splendor. Lovers met
In the white May, will pause from gentle talk,
Feeling dim sorrow, or the violet
Sweeter in fragrance—that hour she is near;
Returning to the bowers of the year.

JACOB'S DREAM.

On the wide plain, beneath the vault of heaven
Flashing with stars, he slept; where three dim palms
Reared soft, o'er the white sands, against the sky.
The winds were hushed; and every leaf was still;
And crouched the lion in the river's bed,
The silver water-course parched by the drought,
Amid its whispering reeds and water-plants,
And small, eyed flowers blue as skies above:
And lo! across the glittering march of stars,
The serried ranks of planets burning red,
Clear globes, and gleaming moons, and golden lights,
A glorious vision dawned! The heavens oped,

And slid an amber cloud from sky to earth,
With silent love and benedictions bowed;
And down its misty way descending soft,
Came white-winged angels, harnessed Cherubim,
Hosts, principalities, and heavenly powers,
Descending and ascending, with bright gifts,
With starry flowers, and heaven's dewy fruit,
And palm, and living waters, to the earth
From heaven, and from earth to the bright skies.
Beautiful shapes, with radiant brows! and o'er
The flying mist, a solemn harmony
Of lutes and viols and angelic voice
Built ever that bright link from heaven to earth
Hushed, dream-like, 'neath the blessing of the Lord!

SAPPHO.

Whene'er I take my lyre in hand to sing,
Before me all those shining ones, my peers,
Crowd my dark roof with splendors. "Low the
string!
What matchless music hast thou for our ears?"
They seem to ask who wear on perfect brows
The laurel of immortal song still clear
Across long Time: nay, but delicious vows,
First, trembling words of love ye well may hear,
Great Ones! triumphant rings the lesser voice;
Love pours the notes, bids fiery strings rejoice!

WOMAN'S LOVE.

I.

As girls will often slip into the breast
Blue violets that, dewy-scented, prest
'Above the heart make maytime of the day;
So I will bear those lines you wrote that say
"I love thee"—let their silver tones unite
With my heart's singing like a bird, at night.

II.

Dearest, I love thee so that fain am I,
Now I have given to thee my stiller hours,
To look thence to May-blooms, a bluer sky,
And pull my childhood back, with its pure flowers
Held in innocent hands, and give it thee
Who henceforth canst ask all my life of me.

III.

What canst thou ask of me I will not give?
A tress, soft severed from its azure band,
The rose I wore, lips where thy name doth live
In sanctuary of dreams, my thoughts, my hand,
The pearl-string of my joys—stars of the morrow,
And here—Belovèd, I give all! my sorrow!

MELODY.

Once more, that melody of sighing strings!
And to its mournful music lend your aid,
Soft voices! so, on my belovèd's breast
My weary head may sink to gentle rest;
And the dim anguish that my sad heart wrings
Be stilled; and every haunting mem'ry fade!
Peace with its tender music lingereth!
O let me listen, and dream on to death!

PIPES AND DANCERS.

But if men will not look upon them! see,
With my delight, my treasures spread them, here!
White, tremulous buds that 'neath the tides of sea
Wave, blue and amber gems of the East, clear,
Bright Indian birds from vales of Paradise,
Fruit rosy and in golden clusters, grown
On cliffs and peaks of glittering isles; their eyes
Gaze not on, with bliss! and when all is shown
That filled my galley of the purple sail,
They will not hear of the strange trees, and groves,
The flashing blossoms, and the sunbright vale,
O'erflowing with the melody of doves,

To which I floated, on a misty stream,
Where asphodels bloom: and if then I sing
Filled with the magic music of a dream,
They will not hear! nor wear fern seed! nor wing,
With white sails, down clear seas! nor listen while
Trees spring to Orpheus' lute! My brows are bright
With jewels from the elfin land—but smile
They; and refuse my offering of delight!
They know no kingdom of a magic isle!

THE CRUSADER.

A speck upon the far, blue sky aglow
With sultry heat! here is the desert spring,
'Neath the date tree! the fountain bubbling clear,
Cool, crystal, sparkling from the white rock, o'er
The drifting sand. Here is the pleasant spot
They told me of where I may rest, the nook
With fine grass, flowers, and palm trees, o'er-
head,
Breaking the sky's fierce sapphire! Fairy trees
And dream-like vision of a covert green,
Still, cool, and peaceful, it appears to eyes
Dimmed by the blaze of sunlight! I will loose
Bridle, drink, stretch my limbs beneath the
shade
That lets a thin, gold stream flicker upon
My hauberk, purple scarf, and jeweled hilt;
And list to that sweet bird above my head,

My journeyings are near at end, I trust,
If all they told me be true—simple folk
Who set me on my way here, from the hills
Low 'gainst the great moon. I shall see God's town!
I, all unworthy! O sweet saints, how oft
Upon the wide plain's verge a vision hung,
An aery, mimic city of the East,
White towered, ranged with splendid palace walls,
With cloudy arch, and dome a lily clear,
Or hovering, dove-like, 'gainst the rosy skies,
The ghostly town of my hopes! Shall I see,
Kneel, touch, kiss holy dust? I trust 'tis so.
I have striv'n, hungered, suffered from the beasts,
Fought with men, beast-like, robbers; wounded, fall'n
Beside the way; and I have done Thy will,
O Christ! though haply not among the chaste
Have I been numbered, who have loved my life

O'er-much, have lived great feast days, kneeled to one
Gold idol, mistress of my heart, flower-sweet—
But not of Thine! Idle, at best, I lived,
Stringing my verse, a milk-white pearl on pearl
Upon the silken cord, or rosary
Of honeysuckle glittering with dew,
Which men commended—yet Thou knowest, Thou!
Came but a trumpet blast—three words from Thee,
At midnight, pealing awful through the cloud
And sleeping town—and I have followed Thee!
Doffed splendid silks for greaves and cuisses: cast
Aside the playtime stylet for the brand:
Laid the cross on this passionate heart; and shook
The falcon, Pleasure, from the wrist to dart
And disappear in blue skies! lived pure; wrought

For Thy sake; and shall fall, guarding Thy tomb!
Shall die on holy earth, and be received
Among Thy glorious choirs and martyr-saints!
For well I know that never any more
Shall I stand in my garden, 'neath the fall
Of peach flower; take my pleasure in warm May;
Sing to the angelot; or pluck the rose
New-budding; laugh and love in pleasant bowers,
'Neath leaf and flower blinding Auria's eyes
With strings of blossoming vine, fragrant with dew,
A spray about her honey-colored locks!
No more look down upon the quiet town—
One star, the while, still, clear, in the soft sky!
I turn my gaze unto the East, the East!
Life's secret, and the meaning of this world!
God's blessing on my triumph; and the end!

SONG.

From my exceeding sorrow spring my songs!
The wild swan his sweet notes, when death is nigh,
Sends up from glittering waters to the sky,
The while his white breast cleaves the rose flushed wave:
The small bird sings her secret nest to save:
The sweetest songs in pensive splendor spring!
When opes the soul its quivering, radiant wing!
From my exceeding sorrow spring my songs!

From my exceeding sorrow spring my songs!
Sorrow that hath as subtle, fainting breath,
As fading lilies, bowing to their death!
Sorrow that makes an awful melody,
Wild, manifold! as worlds' death-hymns may be!

Of silver rain are made my hushèd strings,
Past days, a flower's perfume that haunts and
clings!
From my exceeding sorrow spring my songs!

FATIMA.

Within a blossomy jasmine bower,
My love has made her bed!
Where far and near and overhead
Nightingales sing, and like a flower
A rosy star swims, glitters bright
Within the river light.

On buds and balmy flowers she lies;
The warm and silent night,
With floating cloud and amber light,
Has closed in fragrant sleep her eyes!
Nightingales sing, far, near, o'erhead,
Where my love makes her bed!

DEATH.

Not unknown, unannounced, comest, O Death!
That last day, when upon the shaking stair
Thy foot will sound; and with my latest breath,
I shall arise, and falter, groping, where
My friend will stand—and fall upon thy breast!
Thou wilt strike silence through the fiendish rage
Of hatred and of evil. I shall rest
Who tire of all things! sky and sea! shall wage
No further battle—and I think that so,
Within thine arms, thy healing kiss will ope
My eyes; and I shall see there, in a row,
No angels! but the friends I lost, and hope

Not to behold again—Roland, Conrad,
And Balthazar—ay, I shall see them all!
Frank faces, helmed and glitt'ring brows, and glad,
Blue eyes bent on me: and ere my lids fall,
Her who died for me—Leonora, here!
The closelier to my friend I shall feel prest—
Then once more night, and tapers' flame, and drear
Mutter of shriving priests—then, Heart, thy breast!

OH FOUNTAIN! SPARKLING EVER!

Oh fountain! sparkling ever! leaping! gleaming!
Rising in silver streams, in crystal flow!
Pale lilies cluster near your lucid streaming!
Bright flash your waters under the sun's glow,
Oh fountain! sparkling ever! leaping! gleaming!

Oh fountain! rising e'er with melody,
With gentle murmur, from the distant mountain!
'Neath pearled drops spreads the green: the golden bee
Darts o'er your sparkling head: birds hymn you, fountain!
Oh fountain! rising e'er with melody!

Oh fountain! clear spring from mysterious
deeps!
Pure are your dazzling waters, murmuring ever!
Your glittering, rising stream, that never sleeps!
Immortal fount! your holy joy ends never!
Oh fountain! clear spring from mysterious
deeps!

PSYCHE.

So lovely is the waking day,
With buds, and blossoms, dew-drops of May!
So fair is love! and blissful the delight
Of winds and waves and cloudless heavens bright!
Yet all suffice not the fond soul that wings
Above the sweet content of earthly things:
And higher still its rising hopes aspire,
Like streaming stars that fill the heavens with fire.

PROMETHEUS.

A Fragment.

SONG OF THE HOURS.

Ye rosy spirits! flee away
From rocky crag and fearful way,
The mountain mist, and regions still!
Below, the world, on plain and hill,
Is blossoming, in springtide mirth!
Celestial splendor fills the earth!
Before the dawn, pales each star's light,
The fair sun spreads his tresses bright;
Haste, sisters, through the blushing sky,
Through highest heaven—O pass by
The Once Belovèd! earth awaits
Our coming from dawn's silver gates!

First Spirit of the Air:

O come! and with thy pearly drops, thy dew
Pure, dazzling, touch his burning brow! refresh
His weary limbs!

Second Spirit of the Air:

Our floating veils before
The radiant sun we will draw—hover o'er
His head that sinks beneath the quenchless fire.

Third Spirit of the Air:

With fragrance of the green earth, balmy breath
Of roses, and the bowers that have now,
Alas! forgotten him! I breathe on him.

Fourth Spirit of the Air:

Low, sweet and soft! with dreaming falls, and
tones,
Of passionate harps and heavenly harmony,
With tender songs of men, and the first notes
Of wakening birds, I kneel beside him. Sleep!

O thou belovèd, 'mid thy torture! rest,
As on the patient earth's green breast! Thy love
Hath raised men from the earth to heaven: their souls
Rejoice and bless thee! Rest, O suffering one!
Beneath our gleaming wings spread o'er thy head!

Prometheus:.

Below in orient, dewy fields of earth,
Men toil and sleep: above their misty dreams,
The Gods, within their golden, gleaming halls,
Smile o'er earth's valleys low—but these racked limbs,
That may not find rest 'neath the springing grass,
Or shut in brazen urn; with icy sleet,
Keen frost, with snow, and beating storm, and wind,
Are fired through with fierce pain! beneath the sun

Shrink, burning! shiver 'neath chill dews! O
pain!
Immortal anguish! and undying woe!
And life immortal as breath of the God
Who bound these mighty limbs, where light-
enings play,
And awful thunder rolls along the deep,
Beneath the shivering stars! immortal pain!

First Spirit of the Air:

O hear! up from the deep, what voices rise?

Second Spirit of the Air:

The sea hushes its mighty sound—O hear!

First Ocean Nymph:

Up from the vast and misty depths, we rise!
From windless caverns 'neath the billow, paved
With veinèd gold, and shell, and ocean pearl.
Up, with our long locks crowned with white sea-
flower,
We rise!

Second Ocean Nymph:

With breath of spray, and dazzling light
And ocean music, come we!

Third Ocean Nymph:

Wild sea-birds
Before us dart! the crystal wave shines clear
Beneath the radiant sun: our white limbs gleam
Through its gold spangled light! From hidden caves
Where bee nor bud nor tree is—from still bowers
Beneath the foam, we rise! with music sweet
Of voices soft and aery as the moan
Of silver sounding shell, we come! Prometheus!

Voice of the Earth:

Within my dreams I stir! I hear afar
Aërial voices singing! tones divine!
Yet heard I, trembling to my shuddering heart,
An awful voice of anguish! agony

Of him born of my fertile bosom, loved
Of Earth, the Titan. O let me no more
Those fearful murmurs hearken from the heights,
The solitary mountains! keener grows
The ancient pain of Earth!

SONG OF SPIRITS.

Clear moon, that gazest on the sleeping earth!
Fair visions seest of woods, crystal dews
On new-sprung flowers, rivers, seas, and birth
Of living, radiant fountains, faint mists whose
White skirts thy keen rain pierces, isles of light,
And dreaming beauty, 'mid the forests wild,
Boughs laden with gold orbs, and blossoms bright
Leaf-folded, streams where lilies lift their mild
Light, pastoral fields, and cities, 'neath thy sphere
Ships on their lonely way! thou radiance high
And fair! the harmonies of earth dost hear;

The aery echoes of the unfathomed sky;
And solemn sound that down the heavens rings,
From glittering spheres, and rush of mighty
wings!

IANTHE'S SONG.

The nightingale, beneath the moon
That floods with splendor all the quiet vales,
Spends in sweet melody his passionate sighs!
What joy is his! under the golden skies,
To sing his love, that dreams and dares and fails!

What love is his that breaks his heart
With music? woos he some spirit of night?
Deep-hearted rose? or pearlèd lily born
With the soft radiance of the silent morn,
Dew-gemmed, with aery leaves of delicate light?

The nightingale in melody
Pours forth his raptured heart! O still thy strain,
Sweet spirit! or teach me thy minstrelsy,
Thy passion musical, that Love may be
A listener to my ecstasy and pain!

AFTER DEATH.

Great mercy 'twere! if we might know
Whither their solemn spirits go
Who, living, shared our hearths and love!

Within all silent, mournful places,
We think to see their haunting faces:
Their constant bosoms obdurate prove!

And feet that ne'er afar have gone,
Now, strange and secret ways are on!

ANDROMEDA.

Up from the lucent wave and sea-foam, rose
A blunt head, hideous, gold-gleaming through
The pale-green billow: shone one fiery eye
Upon the maiden's shrinking beauty hung,
Helpless, on the white rock above the deep,
Sea-swept, and down-drawn by the swirling surge;
Her shuddering, trembling body, starting eyes,
And piteous mouth agape in palsied fear,
Fronting the monster, lidless eyed. It rose,
Lashing in diamond spray the ocean mist,
With glossy coils and lambent track upon
The deep; and oped its dragon jaws above
Its prey: but ere it seized upon the maid—
Wrathful, the hero raised his dripping shield,
Whereon Medusa's head, a horror hung,

Within its twisting folds of serpent locks;
And with one glance of those appalling eyes
Slew the sea-fiend that dropped, a lifeless wreath,
Down glassy waves! down to the beryl caves!
And surged the waters in huge waves, reared high
In hollow billow—then ebbed from the shore;
While far and shrill from ocean's glaucous bowers,
The pearly sea-caves of the blue-haired nymphs,
Rose faint wails of sea voices from the deeps!
Then Perseus loosed the maiden from her chains,
And cherishing her chilled hand in his, led
His love, rejoicing, back to life and light!

SONG.

Is it the lark that sings from golden fields,
'Mid pearls of May, and buds of dawn? or yields
His song unto the dreaming nightingale,
When sinking from bright heaven, his sweet notes fail?
Hush, hush, my soul! it is the lark! it is the lark!

Is it the dawn shines on me, from the skies?
Or Love, playing within her sacred eyes
Waking from paly lids? where lilies blow,
Rose-buds bloom soft, amid her virgin snow!
Hush, hush, my heart! it is the dawn! it is the dawn!

May Love dwell in that heavenly Paradise?
Or stir the balmy buds with longing sighs?
O tremble, heart! for angels guard that light!
The garden of her beauty from thy sight!
Hush, hush, my heart! thou may'st not sigh!
thou may'st not sigh!

IDYLS.

I.

AGLAE.

We spoke of Love, of memories, and flowers,
The first lights of the sky: and at the word
Others sighed, gently smiled, and spoke at large,
Sweet thoughts and quiet fancies: but you hushed,
You said no word; yet listening, I heard
Sounds as of bees murmuring 'mid sweet flowers,
Or humming of swift wings, or throb of strings!
They were the awakened echoes of your heart!

II.

TREASURE-TROVE.

From out the heaped wealth in your arms, you dropped
One lucid blossom I reclaimed. You stopped;

With halting foot, swayed, gazing back on me—
Then, smiling, passed: a faint rose momently
Stained your white neck, beneath its curls. This flower,
That smile are mine from out your heart's rich dower!

III.

IN AFTER YEARS.

Shaking the sparkling dew-drops from their locks,
The rosy Hours circle my faint head:
"Where are the roses once wreathed 'round your brows?"
They ask. "Alas!" I answer. "Where is that
Love, Dirce, that you deemed oblivion ne'er
Should bear away, on slow, unresting stream?
It flows, unwearied, to the farther shore;
And love and hope have gone down that dim tide!"

IV.

MYRTIS.

Like sunshine on the grass, upon my breast
Her smiles fall: when the sun in cloudbank dips,
Her frowns are sweeter far than kisses prest,
Folded in splendor down on perfect lips!

BIRD'S LOVE.

Gold-crowned king of the birds, I sing!
Answers my mate, from rosy bough:
'Mid bud and breeze and blossoming,
And gusty leaves that toss and shine,
Her tender notes still answer mine.
Love, shall we nest? for May has walked
In the green woods; with the thrush talked;
And woven dewy wreaths of flowers
From star-strown ways and wild-rose bowers:
And each white, blossomy orchard tree
O'erflows with hidden melody
From fragrant spray and orbed drop, bright,
Glittering, rose-round, to the light.

LAMENT.

Through the dark night, my feet are led
Towards thee! my heart yearns to thee! light,
Mine eyes desire not—but thy face!
O hear me, for all hope has fled
Since the great sun went down, and night
Covers my head with darkness: grace
I ask not, save near thee to die!
To feel thy tears upon my face,
When silence ends the heart's last sigh!

SIEGFRIED IN THE FOREST.

O'er the rims of the blue hills, passed the knights
Into the forest old; where branches low
Brushed lofty casque, and a stray sunbeam shone
On glittering greaves, and silver bugle, hung
From jeweled baldric. 'Neath their mailed feet, rose
Faint perfume of bruised fern, and moss, and buds,
Milk-white, sprung in the hidden forest brake;
And fluttered, to tree-tops, a dove; and through
The arches dim, fled fast the timid deer,
Breaking their woodland covert; with a glint
Of golden horns: hushed was the rustling leaf
Of mighty branching oak, and murmuring pine.
Slow, passed they, bearing home the hero, slain!

High, on his hollow, carven shield, he lay,
Death-white and silent! in his mighty side,
The spear wound gaped; and swayed the listless
head,
With brow raised to the sky. Through the dim
wood,
They went; with solemn voices on the wind,
In lamentation! ancient funeral chant!

LOVE DOTH NOT SHINE THROUGH TEARS!

Love doth not shine through tears!
No part has it in leaden care, and fears!
A breeze rocking the bees and blossoms, light
Of Beauty's eyes, a wingèd spirit bright,
The folding-star of dawn, an aery dream
Lost with the bright morn's quivering, rosy gleam
Is Love! too radiant, visionary fair!
For numbing, human tears, earth-born despair!

THE POT OF BASIL.

With open pane to let the warm night in,
She slept. Her balmy breathing gently stirred
Her tender breast; where ebbed and flowed the life
Dream hushèd 'neath the clear orb of the moon,
And fragrant breeze from honeyed flowers. Across
Her lattice lay the blossoming, airy length
Of some unearthly plant, with veinèd leaf
Dew wet and sparkling, and crowned with a bloom
Strange, swaying, starry-bright! with golden heart,
And burning eye! a shining lamp of dreams,
A delicate perfume upon the air

Calm, odorous; a faery blossom sprung
By night—but O the strange and sad sound
came
From its vibrating leaves! with passionate moan
Filling that chamber sweet! until awake
The dreamer shuddered from her silent rest;
And in the magic moonshine clasped it close,
And sighed, and kissed its flower face, with fall
Of ceaseless tears! its soft, mild light, profound,
Shone on her tremulous beauty: its fair head
Resting, star-bright, upon her frozen heart!

THE ENCHANTED GARDEN.

There was a garden all of dewy flowers
Grew, fresh, unknown to man: there lilies rang
Delicate chimes of snowy bells; 'neath showers
And clear dews burst the musky rose; and sprang
All lovely, aery blossoms that smelt sweet,
Or had a honey heart, or dew-drop light
Glittering on a starry flower-face meet
For guest-birds leaving sky and cloudbank white.
It had a flush of orchard bloom in May;
And gilded insect craft of faery trim;
The tented daisy, silver star of day.
Long, laughing faery creatures in the dim

And cool dwelt in my garden, lone, alone!
In dewy stillness, till—Love! thou didst come!
Broke through the hollies; found the bowers unknown:
The fountain sinks, the nightingale is dumb:
The trembling heart of the enchanted close
Waits for thy hand to pluck the midmost rose.

THE MASTER.

All was snow-cold, flower-perfect in my art
Until I read your script; unrolled the length
Of fine close manuscript. Words whelmed me? nay,
It was yourself came, with a trumpet blare,
On the majestic, sea-like roll of verse:
A wave that washed away my plotted flowers,
With a wild salt breath! shriek of flapping birds!
A storm o'erflowed the limpid springs of life!
I stood in ruined fields and looked afar,
Lost in immensity—but stars o'erhead.
What was that music? Came the answer—"Love!"

SUNKEN CHIMES.

Soft, clear and slow!
With mournful chime,
Up from sea-deeps,—
The pearl-strown caves
Where dim light sleeps
From emerald waves,
Where no winds blow,
Or glist'ning flow'r
Springs, from the tow'r
Beneath the sea,
Ring hauntingly
The bells below—
Soft, clear and slow!

The sea-nymphs list;
And rise, and lean
O'er the blue deep,
The watery main,
Where sword-fish leap;
And hover, fain,
Up from the mist,
To lure the white
Sea-snake crowned bright!
While far, far down,
From the lost town
The bells below,
Ring soft and slow!

LYRICS.

I.

What gifts are brought thee, Love?
Pale roses, odorous boughs,
Field flowers, golden harvestings,
The hyacinth that early springs,
Ay, and pomegranate breathing East,
Wild honey from the Muses' feast,
Myrtle and laurel, budding vine,
The bramble-rose and sweet woodbine;
These are thy gifts, Love! What do I
Bring thee of beauty 'neath the sky?
Alas! I bring my tears!

What songs are brought thee, Love?
Sweet piping from each down,

The trembling, bridal melody
Of merry wedding-minstrelsy,
And songs of maytime blossoming,
When lilies blow, and skylarks sing,
When heavens are blue, and fields are gay,
And bees among the blossoms stray;
These are thy songs, Love! What, with string
Of viol, do I to thee bring?
Alas, I bring my sighs!

II.

I saw where wrangling each with pettish cries,
The infant Hope and Eros strove for thee:
Alas! thine were Love's bow and golden arrows;
Did'st turn thee from the other's proffered flowers.
Thy frowns chid one babe into tears—still clung
His rosy playmate to thy skirts, for through
That harshness, shone thy beauty like the sun
Emerging from the drops of crystal shower.

III.

Love hath a need of e'en the smallest flower,
Of bright blue skies, and breeze-blown dewy shower
From gleaming clouds, and star of evening hour.

It hath a need of memories and sighs,
The old delight of childhood's brooks and skies,
And garden scent and bloom and butterflies.

For Love will each pure flower its star disclose,
Each silver daisy turns a scented rose,
In common paths the faery fern seed grows.

THE COMBAT WITH THE DRAGON.

(Heroic Poem.)

PERSONS.

Sigurd, Olaf, Norse knights.

Erica, a noble maiden.

Helga, mother of Olaf.

First Huntsman, Second Huntsman, Knights and Maidens.

THE COMBAT WITH THE DRAGON.

HEROIC POEM.

SCENE.—A wild, rocky pass of a mountain, leading up to densely wooded heights above.

ENTER TWO HUNTSMEN.

First Huntsman:

The morning star is faded.

Second Huntsman:

The faint sky
Glimmers with hues of rose and pearl: mists fly
O'er the high peaks, before the breeze of dawn:
Voices dispel the silence.

First Huntsman:

This way must
He pass who to the combat with the Dragon
Advances. O'er those solemn heights, and by

High, dizzy paths, up to a barren crag,
Pierced by a fearful cavern, lies the way:
Great rocks stand at the opening of that cave,
Bone-strewn, wind-swept! the hero, at its mouth,
Must wind his horn to bring the fearful foe,
Foaming and breathing death, its winding length
Rustling its scales upon the cavern floor,
Out to his challenge.

Second Huntsman:

Dauntless courage has
The hero! thus to struggle with a foe
Than man a thousandfold more terrible!

First Huntsman:

Its eyes shoot blinding sparks! its shining harness
Turns spear or blade—invulnerable its length
Save at the heart! its fearful, blasting breath
O'ercomes the senses! its fierce talons tear

Through armor and stout helm, and break the
shaft
Of lance as lightly as winds bend a reed!
Conquering, it closes in its dread embrace—
Crushing all life; or hurling down the abyss—
Both steed and rider: and to its grim terror
It adds the soft persuasion of a voice
Of magical and dulcet pleading; tones
Of the entreating child, or woman shriek
Of pain and fear. It can discourse sweet music
To those who harken to its guile: a song
Like that of the enchantress who o'er tide
And running foam, beckons the mariner
To her isle gemmed with bright buds, flush of
rose,
And riot of gold blossom, bee haunted,
And fragrant lily-cups. O terrible
The struggle with this monster that the hero
Prepares for, e'en now!

Second Huntsman:

Who is this great champion?

First Huntsman:

Knight Olaf; who to save the blighted land,
A virgin, pure and blameless, comes unto
Our aid.

Second Huntsman:

God nerve his arm; and may the hosts
That wait on noble deeds attend his way!
Harken! what strange, far sound above the heights!
Faint and yet clear!

First Huntsman:

The Dragon! ah, the Dragon!
The hour approaches.

(Exeunt.)

Enter Olaf.

Olaf: Clothed all in purity and prayer, I come,
Thou mighty foe! and this day that dawns clear
Shall see thy death-fall. In my vigil, came
A great voice o'er me, through the mighty dome,
While incense floated in the tapers' glow,

And rosy lights beat down upon my head,
And blinding shafts of quivering, dazzling light;
Saying—"By thy long prayer—sorrow endured
Since first thy mother bore thee, on the isle,
The misty isle deserted on the sea,
Where drifted that wrecked vessel that brought her—
The tender victim of the brother kings!
And her scant following tried, to its strange shore
Shelving, sea-swept and shining, to the deep!
By thy adventure and quests manifold,
Thy patient service, I command thee gird
Thy youthful vigor for this last great trial!
Thou shall't prevail! adventure thou thy life,
And lose what thou shall't find!" Thou mother earth!
Escape thou not my feet! but bear me firm
Through all the gliding twists of my great foe:
Inspire my limbs with thy endurance! Winds,
Bear far from me the monster's noxious breath

And blinding vapors, suffocating blasts!
Blow clear from the white North and dissipate
The arid air! Great shield of Heaven, thou sun!
Send down thy golden, streaming, shining beams
Within the cavern's shadows, and disperse
The green and golden mists of sorcery!
Winged monarch of the aery skies, gold-eyed,
Clang me to victory! I know not hate,
Nor fear, nor scorn. Before my blade shall fall
Evil, prone in dust. I come, thou foe! (blows bugle).
High in thy misty fastnesses, hear thou
My challenge!

(Exit up the pass.)

Enter Sigurd.

Sigurd: He lingers not, but rushes on his fate!
Strange spinners 'neath the branching tree of Heaven,
Decide this hour: I wait your will. If he
Return back from that fearful cavern—here

He must confront me: for no man shall live
Who shames me with his nobleness. Shall I
See him the slayer of that foe I shunned,
In fear? I—boldest heart and whitest knight
Of all the court! and watch his bridals with
That loveliest of maidens, Erica,
My long belovèd, whom, with patient service,
I wooed to my arms? Cursèd be the heart
That failed! the arm that sank! when he appeared,
Heaven-sent and shining in his youthful beauty,
From far adventure in the magic East,
Where the gold banner flies o'er milk-white sands;
And reft my kingship o'er men from me! I
Dared all trials, and knew not that I could falter!
Ere that hour: but if he the Dragon slay,
Great honor 'twere if I might o'ercome him,
The conqueror. My glory I will wrest
Back from him now, or die! (faint bugle blast, above). Harken, the challenge!

The struggle has begun! O Shame that fires
My heart aid me! and Love that sees its loss!
Give back my manhood, hero! we cannot
Be both the noblest, both the mightiest.
This arm shall all decide. I will possess
Her! free my soul—or die! Wins he? or has
He fled? No sound blows down from the far heights,
Where broods a magic fear. He hath drunk deep
Of battle now, of blood and tears: a silence
Lies on all things, on wing and leaf and stream—
They await the issue, bliss or bane: and clouds
Roll up the golden sky, and passionate light,
A shadow on the rich vales, hung with flowers,
White foam of blossom: the mysterious peaks
Darken. Has he fallen? or risen above
Our heads, in solemn majesty? No sound,
No cry of the great monster's agony
Descends, nor bruit of conflict: melody
Of far enchantment that many a knight

Has heard above his dazzled, drowsy brain—
And passed to death in that wild, drifting music.
O shame! O deathful sloth and fear! I wait.
(Withdraws at side.)

Enter Olaf.

Olaf: My brow touches the skies! O thou low world,
Bleeding and breathless, I await the shock
Of countless foes; my breast the bulwark 'gainst
Their fury. Blow, thou bugle! north, south, west,
East! victory! to kings of distant lands,
I have drunk deep of battle, and have won.
Blow, bugle! wake the echoes—victory!

Sigurd: Thy armor hacked and dinted hangs: the dust
Of conflict, with blood, darkens thy fair locks:
Red drops fall fast from many wounds, the marks

Of ravening claws, and tearing fangs! The monster—
Lies it low?

Olaf: It has perished. Nevermore,
Shall it prey on fair flocks and hapless shepherd;
And darken, with its greed, the sunbright land.
Up the wild steep, I took my way, by lone,
Untrodden paths above the mountain mists,
The woods and falling streams and dim ravine,
Till reached I the grim lair of the dread worm;
A cavern deep and gloomy, 'round whose mouth
Lay bleaching bones of victims; a dark gulf
That seemed the sloping entrance down to Hell!
No light saw I in that dim place; until,
Resigning my soul, blew I three clear blasts
Of bugle, echoing to the hills: then grew
A strange and shining splendor in that cave,
And with a sound as of dead leaves adrift
Within the golden, autumn woods, or hiss
Of surf on gleaming beach, a coiling length,
With fearful front, and eye of basilisk,

Issued from darkness—and the struggle closed!
Vainly I hurled the spear, and smote with blade
Against that lustrous harness, still unharmed;
And at each stroke with bellowing roar, it blew
A vapor horrible about my head,
Of sulphur fume, and poison virulent;
And lashed its dread length o'er me. Once, down-thrown,
I looked for death! but struggled, seeking e'er
The weak spot in that fearful, glittering mail;
Weak with my hurts, and shadowed o'er with dread!
At last, snapt lay the spear, and hacked the sword:
I 'scaped the shock, and once more, onward rushed—
Felt o'er me close the dripping fangs—sprang back
From out its clutches—slipped and fell! but saw
That instant near me the throb of its heart,
Amid the winding, twisting, countless folds;

And ere it fastened on me, drove the blade
Up to the hilt within the monster's breast!
The air grew dark; the fading, clouded skies
Hung dim above the awful cry it sent
Up in its anguish: then with bubbling blood,
It passed in music wonderful and strange!
Like the white swan that o'er the lucent wave,
Drifts, singing, in wild radiance, to its death,
Upon the rosy waters of the lake!
Limp lay the coils! dull, lifeless, in the sun;
Their glittering hues, and elfin lustre dead,
The gliding lights of purest emerald,
And golden brede of its enchanted mail;
And all remained was hideous, when life
Had fled the Fiend. With panting breath, and pain,
I rose from earth, and dragged my weary limbs
Down the steep pass; down to the happy fields!
Till o'er the shining hills and vales, I sent
The bugle music of my victory!

Sigurd: Mighty art thou, Olaf: but hast not quelled
Thy fiercest foe. My honor lies low in
The dust of thy great conflict. I am knight
And hero, and I struggle to the death
For my lost fame. I charge thee, by thy oaths,
To yield me combat: for by my faith, shall't
Not stir hence, victor of the monster dead;
Till thou hast tried my manhood! battled for
Thy glory!

Olaf: Never have I striven for
Mere petulance, and passion of the blood:
But followed noble deeds.

Sigurd: Yet must thou prove
Thee now, against my sorrow and despair!

Olaf: Wilt thou assay me, bleeding from my quest?
The elfin blood still crimsoning my brand?
All glorious with my conquest, and my strife;
The storm and mist of battle? and dost think

To overthrow me who have won, and shine,
Glitt'ring in fellowship of knights?

Sigurd: Dost hear
The faint chant rises from the distant vale?
The noble maiden, Erica, wends hither:
Her maidens follow, 'mid the flowers and breeze,
Shining o'er meads a-flame with colored buds—
A vision 'mid the rosy dawn and light.
She leads, with holy care, thy mother here,
To hail thee hero. Never will I see
Her in thy arms! Flame from the ashes of
My grey despair, I spring against thee! Gird
Thee! arm and front me, Olaf, sword to sword!
And let her wed the victor in the fight—
Strike!

Olaf: So wilt make a foe of me who should
Be bound to thee with vows of brotherhood
Closest and noblest, of pure faith—I close
With thee!

(They fight. Sigurd falls.)

Sigurd: Christ! I am overcome!

Olaf: For thou
Hast striven wickedly. May'st thou repent;
This hour of passion past. I harm thee not.
Heaven make thee worthy of thy vows: subdue
Thy flame of pride to pure obedience.

ENTER ERICA LEADING HELGA; AND MAIDENS.

Helga: He lives! and God has heard my prayers that rose,
Ceaselessly, all the silent night, afar
In the rich city of the King: has heard
The slow tears falling from my agèd eyes,
In patient rain; the anguish stifled lest
Complaint mingle with prayer! He lives! nor must
I dwell, a lonely heart, beside a hearth
Lonely and childless—hearing voices, past,
A music on the wind of autumn days,
Rising, failing, about the ruinous towers;
Old footsteps echoing in chambers dim,

And ghostly corridors, 'mid falling rain!
He lives: and God gains glory through his life!
His faithful knight.

Erica: O Prince, thy prize am I,
In thy great lists, awarded by the King:
And so thou holdest me, a simple maid,
A boon worthy thy taking—I am thine,
O Prince!

Olaf: Thy blessing, mother, on thy child!
Let thy love crown my quest; be greatest gain
Of glory for the task completed, that
Shall shine gold on the shield giv'n by the King:
And live in all high places, when I die!
In burning glory of the warrior-saints;
In emblem and device; and songs of bards
Recounting tales of knighthood. Lo, 'tis done!

Enter Knights.

No more shall fear lurk in green field and mead,
For shepherd, or the tiller of the soil;

Or forest pathways hold a fiercer prey
Than the deer of the wild woods, and the deeps.
The land is freed; and all the ways are clear
From wood to sea; and cleansed the fearful toils,
O'er cloudy peaks with its enchantments hung,
Where lay the monster grim! Knights, brother-
hearts,
Who hold my honor, yours, the deed is done!
The quest completed! I have slain the Dragon!

Knights (clashing their spears against their shields): Hail, Olaf, Olaf! hail!

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